



United States Mint Launches First Coin With Readable Braille at the National Federation of the Blind Headquarters in Baltimore

March 26, 2009

BALTIMORE — United States Mint Director Ed Moy, joined by National Federation of the Blind (NFB) President Marc Maurer, launched the Nation's first coin with readable Braille during a ceremony today at the NFB headquarters in Baltimore. The coin commemorates the life and work of Louis Braille, who developed the tactile method of reading and writing used by the blind. The ceremony included a videotaped message from United States Senator Christopher J. Dodd, one of the primary sponsors of the "Louis Braille Bicentennial-Braille Literacy Commemorative Coin Act" (Public Law 109-247).

"For the first time in history, the United States has a coin with readable Braille," Director Moy told the audience. "The 2009 Louis Braille Bicentennial Silver Dollar honors the developer of Braille, a tactile code that has been instrumental in the literacy and independence of the world's blind people."

NFB First Vice President Frederic Schroeder, a research professor and pioneer in orientation and mobility for the blind, served as master of ceremonies. Additional guests included noted mathematician and inventor Abraham Nemeth and Dr. Joyce Winterton, the Assistant Administrator for NASA Education, who announced plans to carry the 2009 Louis Braille Bicentennial Silver Dollar aboard a future space shuttle flight. Following the event, participants had the opportunity to purchase the new coin, which is also available today beginning at noon Eastern Time, at the United States Mint's Web site, www.usmint.gov, and at the toll-free number, 1-800-USA-MINT (872-6468). Orders for the proof and uncirculated silver dollar coins are limited to 50 units per coin option per household.

Public Law 109-247 authorizes the United States Mint to mint and issue 400,000 Louis Braille Bicentennial Silver Dollar coins in proof and uncirculated versions. Surcharges collected from sales of the coins are authorized to be paid to the NFB to further its programs to promote Braille literacy. A special Braille Education Set will be available later in the spring.

The coin's obverse (heads side) design features a portrait of Louis Braille. The coin's reverse depicts a child reading a book written in Braille while holding a cane, the universal symbol of independence for the blind. The word Braille—abbreviated BRL in Braille code—is depicted in the upper field on the coin. A bookshelf in the background displays the word INDEPENDENCE.

To view an image of the 2009 Louis Braille Bicentennial Silver Dollar, go to:
</news/image-library/news-image-gallery>.

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